

REMARKS

In response to the Office Action dated April 5, 2007, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the rejections of the claims. The withdrawal of the previous ground of rejection is noted with appreciation.

The previously pending claims have been amended to expedite examination and allowance. The amendments make explicit what was already implicit in the claims. They do not narrow the scope of the claims, and are not being made for the purpose of overcoming the current grounds of rejection.

Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103, on the basis of the newly-cited Farrell et al. and Trovinger et al patents (US 6,873,426 and US 6,708,967, respectively). Claims 3, 6, 9, 12 and 15 were rejected on the basis of these two patents, in view of a tertiary reference, the Jeyachandran et al. patent (US 6,567,176). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections for at least the reason that the Farrell patent does not disclose the claimed subject matter that is attributed to it in the Office Action.

Claim 1 recites a printing system having an on-line client, print server and printer, and an off-line finishing device. Among other features, the claim recites that the print server includes sorting means for separating finishing specifics included in a received job ticket into those to be performed by the printer and those to be performed by the finishing device. The print server also includes setting means for setting, in the on-line printer, the parameters for the finishing specifics as separated by the sorting means that are assigned to the on-line printer, and creating means for creating data for a finishing device job ticket that includes the finishing specifics separated by the sorting means that are assigned to the finishing device. Thus, the

finishing specifics in a received job ticket are sorted and assigned among two different devices, namely the printer and the finishing device.

The Office Action asserts that the Ferrell patent discloses the claimed sorting means, with reference to column 4, lines 13-24 and column 4, line 43 to column 5, line 8. It is respectfully submitted that these passage do not disclose a sorting means that sorts the finishing specifics in a received job ticket into two distinct portions, namely those to be performed by an on-line printer and those to be performed by a finishing device. Nor does any other portion of the patent disclose such subject matter.

The Farrell patent discloses a printing system 10 having a printer 16 with a finisher 18. The system also includes a controller 24 that obtains the finishing instructions for a particular print job (column 4, lines 7-8). The patent discloses that, if the finishing element 18 is off line, or is otherwise unavailable, the controller performs one of two actions. As one option, it can substitute alternative finishing instructions that are compatible with available finishing equipment, e.g. the printer. This option is identified as "substitute literal finishing". Alternatively, it can employ "substitute abstract finishing", in which desired finishing instructions are represented by slipsheets, colored folders, annotations, etc. (column 4, lines 13-24). As stated in the patent:

[T]he present invention envisions a user selecting between either abstract or literal finishing operations at the job onset or during run-time. That is, the job may be prepared with the finishing capabilities existing on the print machine, or with detailed abstract finishing denoting the finishing operation to be later performed. (Column 4, lines 49-55)

In other words, the technique disclosed in the Farrell patent looks at the finishing operation as a single entity that is carried out on one machine. It is either

performed by the on-site printer (literal finishing), or deferred to a later time when the required equipment becomes available (abstract finishing).

In contrast, the sorting means recited in claim 1 separates "the finishing specifics" in the job ticket into those to be performed by the on-line printer and those to be performed by the finishing device. As such, the finishing specifics are not treated as a single entity. Rather, they are divided among two different pieces of equipment. It is respectfully submitted that the Farrell patent does not disclose dividing the finishing aspects of a print job in such a manner. It employs an "all or nothing" approach, where the finishing operation is carried out on one machine or the other, but not both.

For at least this reason, therefore, it is respectfully submitted that the Ferrell patent does not suggest the subject matter of claim 1 to a person of ordinary skill in the art, whether considered by itself or in combination with the Trovinger patent. Furthermore, it is respectfully submitted that this distinguishing feature is brought out in each of the other independent claims. Accordingly, each of claims 1, 4, 7, 10 and 13 is submitted to be patentably distinct from the references. Since all other pending claims depend from one of these patentably distinct independent claims, they are likewise submitted to be patentable over the references.

The foregoing features of the invention are equally applicable to printing systems in which a finishing device, separate from the printer, may be in communication with other devices in the system. In other words, the finishing device need not be completely off-line to implement the concepts of the disclosed invention. New claims 16-20 encompass such an implementation of the invention, and are submitted to be patentable over the references, for the reasons set forth above.

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections, and allowance of all pending claims.

Respectfully submitted,

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